Thursday morning, Oct. 9, 2014

Hi everyone,

Thanks for another great learning experience for me today. I’m writing to provide some feedback and perspective that may be helpful.

I assigned a “10” to all the groups because 100% of my stated expectations were realized: The group formed an idea, started researching, and presented it. Steph and I will provide feedback (which may not be consistent, so please communicate with us if you feel caught between two advisors who disagree – I had two advisors in grad school). The second and final presentations will be graded more critically, because we will be looking at your findings and what you learned and taught us.

PPT presentations: You are invited to use PPT, but not required. I also think it’s great to page through the webpage – maybe this brings the class closer to your group? In the past, a group once gave a skit. You could also just talk, but pictures are nice.

One piece of feedback – I think it is a bad idea to put a lot of words on slides, which makes the audience have to choose between listening and reading. My best example of “don’t do” and “yes do!” comes from the disabilities project:

Their first slide had a whole abstract to read through that was not practical in my opinion (I think that Famine did this too). The following slides had writing on them conveying ideas, and then there was this beautiful picture of the medical facility. I would propose instead to just put the title on the intro slide with just enough words to remind the presenters what it is they are trying to remember to say. Then show the picture of the medical center with some bullet points to remind the presenter of the narrative. Then they showed the two pictures of blind people getting piggy-back rides, while they described the situation – this slide (in my opinion) was done perfectly.

In general, I encourage people to resist the urge to make a technical design. This is not the design class. In this class, we are studying how people respond to development activities. I thought about Mariah’s perspective today and the conversation that it fostered. I think that a lot of what we study this quarter is the trouble that ensues because we don’t pay attention to people. In the “global North” (industrialized countries) we often get caught up in a perspective of “fixing” something. Then we end up with a bunch of latrines facing Mecca.

I provide some more specific feedback for each group on the <http://appropriatetechnology.wikispaces.com/Projects+for+UNIV-391+Fall+2014> for you all to read if you like.

So have you been throwing away your trash? Have you forgotten? Have you forgotten and then remembered and started gain to save it, or decided not to save it? Please share your experiences on <http://appropriatetechnology.wikispaces.com/Don%27t+Throw+Anything+Away>

Thanks

Pete

**Solar Concentrators:** In my opinion the focus of the project is way to technical. In the description webpage: <http://appropriatetechnology.wikispaces.com/Projects+for+UNIV-391+Fall+2014> , I outlined some of the human challenges I found interesting. You don't have to do what I've recommended - this is your project. However, the direction of the work should be centered around society, human responses, cultures, politics... stuff like that. I think that part of the problem is who you are and I am who I am. We are all technical people with the possible exception of Garrett. We see the world through a technical lens. I apologize for not catching this sooner. I suggest that John move to a different group that could use another person with a technical perspective - and trade in someone with arts expertise. We didn't even form groups until week 3 in the past, so switching now shouldn't pose a problem. This switching doesn't have to happen, but I strongly encourage you to embrace some of the social, societal, political, corruption barriers to acceptance and implementation of solar cooking, or use of improved stoves. I strongly encourage you to contact a partner from the people I've included in the description webpage above, or contact someone else.

With it fully understood that we are not going to focus on technical stuff, let me satisfy my own technical addiction by providing some technical feedback. Distilling water requires more than 5 times as much energy as bringing it to a boil. Additionally solar cooking groups stressed that you only need a temperature of 150 F to sterilize water. Some doctors may disagree, but my guess is that for parasites, 150 F functionally does the job. So unless you have poisonous minerals in the water (see Arsenic in Bangladesh) then there is no reason to distill the water. Distilling water is profoundly more sophisticated technology than just heating it, and you would probably be able to functionally sterilize 10 times as much water as you could distill in the same amount of time - you could do it without concentrating the sun - you only need straight sunlight.

**Disabilities and Blindness:** Again, please don’t get hung up on the technology of transportation. Please explore more the wider challenges and opportunities for the blind, the possibility of curing it, the prevention – do people wear sunglasses? Would this help? I love the idea of providing work as a massage therapist. I strongly encourage you to contact someone working with seeing hands NGO. Ask them if there’s something you can do to help? If they have a challenge?

**Famine in Congo:** Again, I encourage you to not get too focused on the technical issues of Ox raising, although some of this may warrant looking into (in my opinion). I think it’d be great to follow the questions implying that there’s nothing you can do there because of political unrest. The truth is that they *are* having significant success. Alex says 1200 families are making a living in their community. I don’t believe that WVI even sends money for this, but you should find out what’s really happening. How is it that war doesn’t destroy the community? My understanding is that if people (in this area) can farm and feed their families, they don’t engage in war. But I don’t know.

**Family Planning and PB Mamas:** It seems you’re off to a good start. I encourage you to look at the wider community as mentioned, where does the food come from, etc.? Steph do you have anything to add?